

A person wearing a dark hoodie and a cap with "DENVER" on it is walking past a black recycling bin. The bin has "CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER" printed on it. In the background, there are other recycling bins and a white truck. The scene is outdoors on a paved surface.

# Recycling: Denver and Beyond

March 2023

# Agenda

- Waste Diversion
  - Recycling
  - Compost
  - Hard-to-Recycle
- Q&A/Discussion
  - Denver Solid Waste Management Services

# Why Recycle and Compost?

- Landfills are a finite resource – what goes in there, stays in there.
- Recycling and composting put valuable resources back into the production cycle.
- Composting reduces our community's greenhouse gas emissions and helps to restore our soil.
- Recycling uses less energy and resources than creating new items.
- Relies on **END MARKETS**.



# Remember!



- While recycling and composting are great alternatives to landfilling our waste, **waste reduction and prevention** are even better. The less waste you have to manage, the better!



- Vote with your dollar!



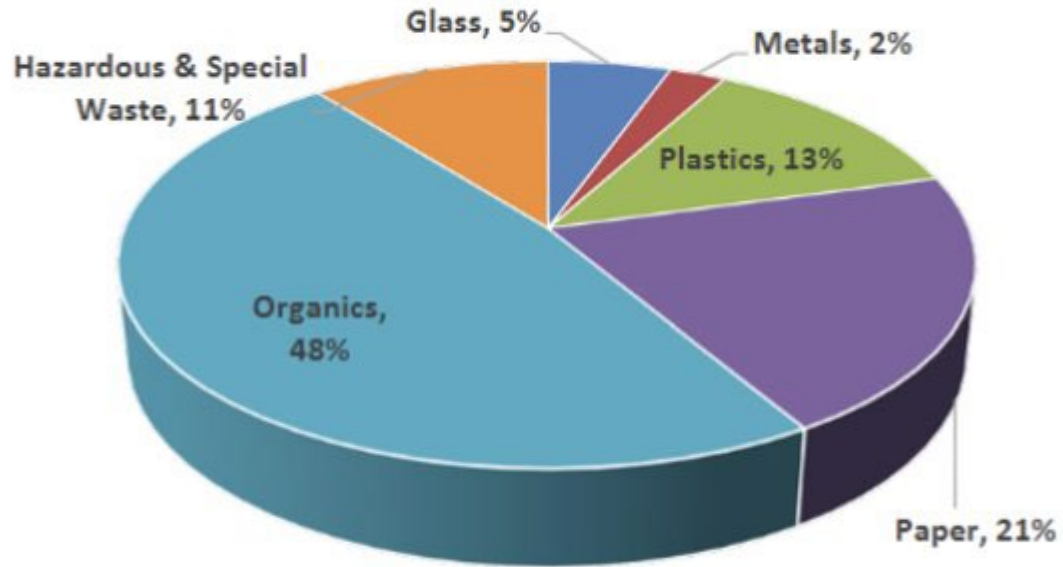
Residential waste diversion rates are well behind equivalent cities who utilize a volume-based pricing approach\*

(National Average = 34%)

\*this table compares, apples to apples, residential diversion rates only

City	Diversion Rate
Loveland, CO	58%
Seattle, WA	54%
Boulder, CO	53%
Chittenden County, VT	44%
Longmont, CO	41%
Gainesville, FL	41%
Salt Lake City, UT	40%
<b>Denver</b>	<b>26%</b>

Figure ES-1 – Trash Composition by Material Categories







# Recycling



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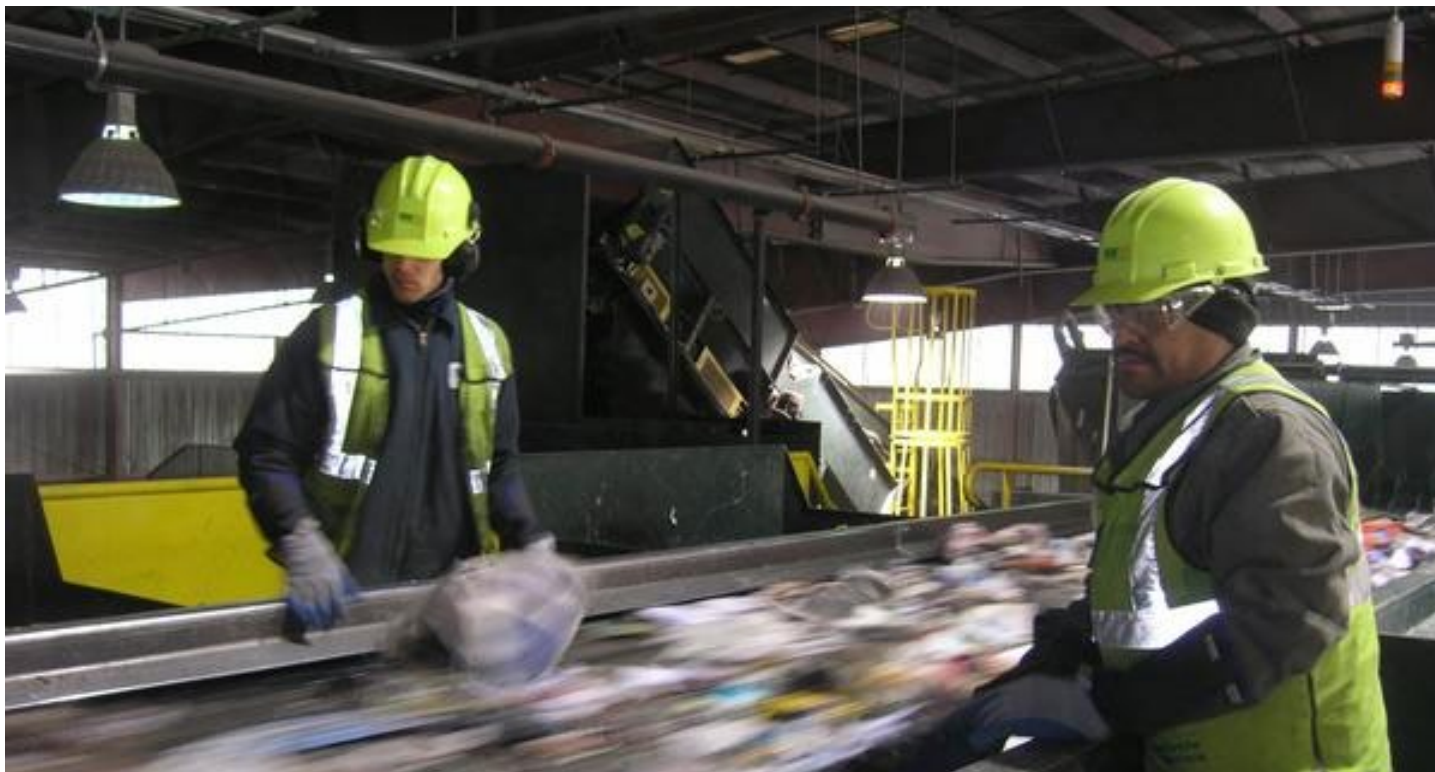
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# Material Recovery Facility (MRF)





# Sorting Line



# Material Recovery Facility

Star Screen Sorter



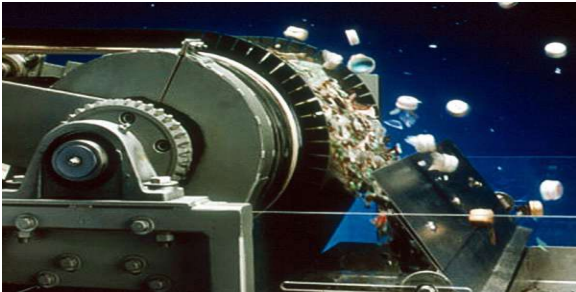
Optical Sorter



Glass Breaker



Eddy Current Separator






Balers



Artificial Intelligence



# Denver's End Markets for Recyclables

COMMODITY/ MATERIAL	GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION
 Glass	Colorado
HDPE Plastic	Colorado + Midwest
 Steel	Midwest
 Aluminum	Southeast
Paper	Midwest + Mexico
PET Plastic	Midwest
Mixed Plastics	North America
Cardboard	Midwest
Cartons	Midwest

(as of January 2022)

# RECYCLE THESE ITEMS IN YOUR PURPLE CART



## Bottles & Cans



Aluminum & Steel Cans, Glass Bottles,  
Plastic Bottles, Aerosol Cans

## Boxes



Cardboard (flattened), Food Boxes,  
Paper Towel Tubes, Pizza Boxes

## Paper



Food & Beverage Cartons, Magazines,  
Mixed Paper, Newspaper, Paper Cups

## Plastics



Kitchen, Laundry,  
Bath: Bottles, Containers, Tubs

Please make sure all containers are empty, with lids and caps removed.





# Compost



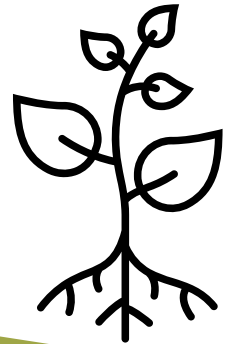
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# What is Composting?

- Composting is the recycling of organic material.
- Biological process that turns food and yard waste into compost – a nutrient-rich soil amendment that can be used on lawns, gardens, farms, and open space.
- Benefits:
  - Organics in the landfill release methane – a powerful greenhouse gas. Composting reduces our community’s greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Puts resources back into the production cycle and creates a circular system: our food and yard waste can grow new food and yard waste!
  - Compost (finished product) helps with nutrient and water retention and builds a healthier soil.



An estimated **50%** of Denver's waste is compostable!

# Composting Process





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# Finished Product



# Try it for yourself!

Mulch Giveaway, May 6  
8am-2pm while supplies last!



Compost Sale, May 5-7

At Participating Ace Hardware Stores





# DON'T WASTE the GOOD STUFF!



Small CMA approved compostable bags accepted. No other packaging accepted in Denver's green compost carts.



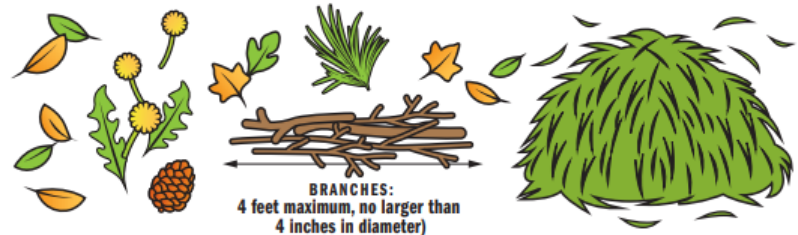
## COMPOST THESE ITEMS IN YOUR GREEN CART

### Food Scraps



Baked Goods, Coffee Grounds, Dairy, Eggshells, Fruits & Vegetables,  
Meat & Bones, Prepared Food, Spoiled or Moldy Food

### Yard Debris



BRANCHES:  
4 feet maximum, no larger than  
4 inches in diameter)

Branches, Brush, Flowers, Grass Clippings, Leaves,  
Pinecones, Pine Needles, Weeds

# What are the changes?

- The Front Range's compost processor, A1 Organics, is changing their acceptable materials list **effective April 1**.
- These items are no longer accepted in the compost:
  - **Paper products:** including paper towels, napkins, pizza boxes
  - **Compostable packaging and serviceware:** including cups, cutlery, to-go containers
  - **Compostable bags EXCEPT** 3-gallon or smaller CMA approved compostable bags
  - **Paper yard waste bags EXCEPT** during LeafDrop

**Food scraps and yard & plant trimmings ONLY!**

# Contamination

- The items you put in your recycling and compost carts are used to create new materials. Contamination can slow down or stop the process, so it's important to *know before you throw!*
- Plastic bags, scrap metal, and tangles should never go in your recycling and compost carts.
- Our compost processor is not able to accept paper products or compostable packaging of any kind *except for small CMA approved compostable bags*. Please ensure these items are placed in the trash cart.
- It's easy to know what goes where – check the **Waste Directory** online or in the free Denver Trash and Recycling App! Available in English and Spanish.



**NO!** Bagged recyclables

**NO!** Clothing

**NO!** Compostable food  
serviceware or packaging

**NO!** Construction debris

**NO!** Diapers

**NO!** Dryer lint

**NO!** Foil bags

**NO!** Fuel canisters

**NO!** Pet waste

**NO!** Plastic bags

**NO!** Scrap metal (bulky  
metals, cookware or hangers)

**NO!** Styrofoam®

**NO!** Trash

**NO!** Treated or coated wood

**NO!** Tangles  
(cords, hoses or chains)

**NO!** Toys

**NO!** Used toilet paper



# Landfill

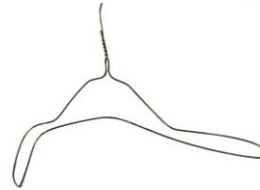


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# Items to Landfill





# “Hard to Recycle”

## Electronics

- State Landfill Ban for Electronics (2013)
- E-Cycle Coupon and events
- [Denvergov.org/ecycle](http://Denvergov.org/ecycle)

## Appliances

- Free scheduled collections

## Hazardous Waste

- Household Hazardous Waste collection appointments
- [Denvergov.org/HHW](http://Denvergov.org/HHW)



# What about the other stuff?

**Peanut butter jars:** Recycle

**Styrofoam meat trays:** Trash

**Bacon and other meat grease:** Compost

**Large clam shells with a plastic wrap edge:** Recycle\*

**Alkaline Batteries:** Trash, can be hard-to-recycled\*

**Paint:** PaintCare paint recycling

**Aerosol cans:** Recycle if non hazardous

**Christmas trees:** Drop off with Mulch Giveaway, Compost if broken down to requirements

**Mattresses:** Donated through SpringBack

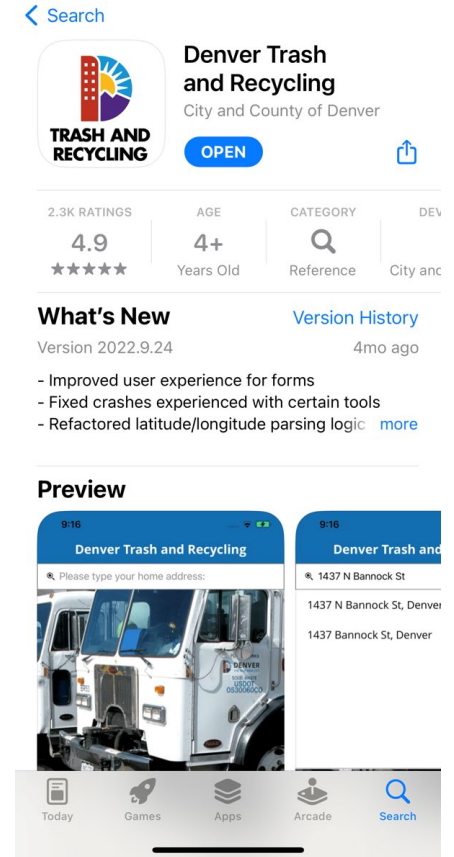
**Computers/Electronics:** Recycled, [DenverGov.org/ecycle](https://denvergov.org/ecycle)

**Pizza boxes with grease:** Backyard compost or recycle non-greasy parts

# Download the App

It's easy to know what goes where – check the **Waste Directory** online or in the free Denver Trash and Recycling App! Available in English and Spanish.

Get service alerts, learn what goes where, find upcoming events, and get reminders about collections.



# Questions?

[DenverGov.org/Recycle](https://denvergov.org/Recycle)

[DenverGov.org/Compost](https://denvergov.org/Compost)

[DenverGov.org/CartSmart](https://denvergov.org/CartSmart)